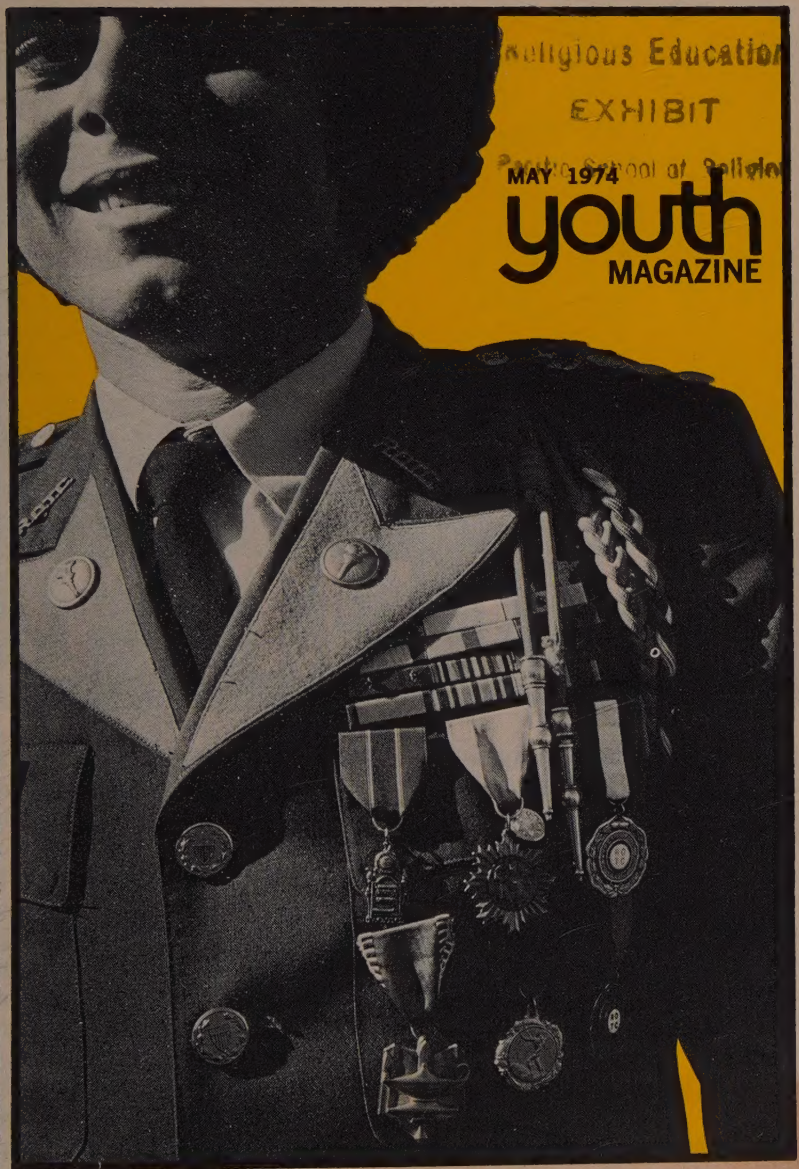
MILITARY TRAINING IN HIGH SCHOOLS

TEENS WHO HEAR LEARN SIGN LANGUAGE IN SPECIAL CLASS

EDWARD ALBERT ON "BUTTERFLIES," GROWING UP AND RELIGION



Religious Education
EXHIBIT
Pacific School of Religion

MAY 1974

youth MAGAZINE

JON VOIGHT STARS WITH BLACK STUDENTS

"WIPE THAT GRIN

Text by Bob Levering
Photos by Bob Fitch

"Atten-hut!" shouts the drill leader.

"Wipe that grin off your face!" barks the Marine sergeant at someone in the group.

"And spit out that chewing gum!" growls the sergeant at another young man.

Soon the familiar sounds of marching can be heard: "Right column . . . March! . . . To the rear . . . March! . . ." as the drill leader leads his uniformed cadets around the marching field.

Marine boot camp? Far from it. That was a second period class at J. Eugene McAteer High School in San Francisco.

Across the city at John O'Connell Vocational High School a sixth period class has begun:

"MT-1s! Go get your rifles!"

Bob Levering is a Bay Area-based free-lance writer.

Bob Fitch, a frequent contributor to YOUTH magazine, is from Oakland, Calif.

OFF YOUR FACE!"

shouts the company sergeant. "And that means you!" one of the slow ones is told.

Most of the students have filed out of the classroom when a young girl rushes in—late.

The company sergeant reacts quickly: "Ten jumping jacks!"

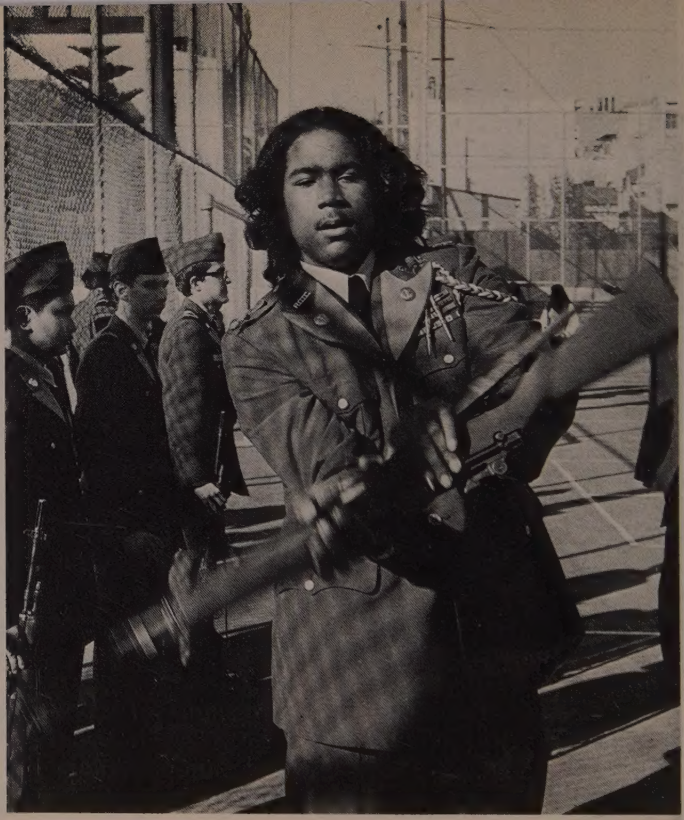
Immediately the late girl starts jumping. When finished she stands at attention and asks: "Permission to recover, Sir?"

The company sergeant responds mechanically: "Permission to recover . . . Given!"

Does that sound more like the Army than high school to you? That's not surprising. The class at O'Connell School is an Army program. It's called JROTC—initials standing for Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps.

Throughout the United States, 1200 high schools are authorized by Congress to have JROTC units, each with a minimum of 100 males, 14 years or older. Most are Army (650), but the Navy and Air Force also have JROTC units (275 each). In all,

"I joined JROTC mostly for the shooting," said one student. "I enjoy that."



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more than 150,000 high school students in the U.S. are enrolled in JROTC units.

Many colleges have long had ROTC units, but they are different from the high school version. When a college ROTC cadet graduates, he or she becomes an officer in the military. For Army, Air Force, or Marine cadets, that means becoming a Second Lieutenant; for Navy cadets, an ensign. And the graduating college ROTC cadet is obligated to enter active duty in the Armed Forces—usually for at least four years.

The high school JROTC graduate has no obligation whatsoever to the military. Nor does she or he become an officer upon graduation.

Although some U.S. schools make ROTC compulsory, in the San Francisco high schools, JROTC is offered as an elective. Why do students choose JROTC over Physical Education?

Michael Salanoa of Galileo High School signed up because "I wanted something new. When I first joined I wanted to shoot a rifle." At O'Connell School, Brian White joined because of the JROTC drill team—"I liked the way it looked." Walter Garcia, also at O'Connell, says, "I joined because I am planning to go into the Army as a career." Edward Moy, a junior at Galileo, adds, "I just joined ROTC to see what it was like. Now it has made me interested in going into the military service."

Some people are concerned that some high schoolers, like Edward Moy, decide on a military career as a result of their JROTC training. Dave McFadden, of the Ecumenical Peace Institute in San Francisco, a group opposed to JROTC and to militarism generally, puts it this way: "High school kids are very impressionable. They're bound to be very impressed with the uniforms, the drills, the weapons. JROTC is just another recruiting arm for the military."

Now that the U.S. armed forces must depend on volunteer recruitees instead of compulsory draftees to maintain their manpower strength, could JROTC become the military's way to start their recruiting early?

At McAteer School, Sgt. Major Robert Mason, a 30-year Marine veteran who teaches Navy ROTC, says, "I think ROTC encourages people to go into the military. However, we level with them about the possibility of going into combat and getting shot. We tell them the truth." His colleague, Lt. Commander John Rockett, agrees: "We hope that we can motivate some to go into the Navy or Marine Corps."

However, Col. James P. Kellogg, director of the Army

ROTC program in San Francisco, disagrees: "Junior ROTC does not recruit in any way for the armed services." To be sure, the JROTC instructors "point out the advantages of a military career," according to Col. Kellogg. These advantages include the possibilities of an ROTC scholarship to college, and the considerable pay and fringe benefits of being an officer in the military. Col. Kellogg insists, "We don't try to steer them. We just point out the facts."

If JROTC is not intended either to train officers or to recruit for the military, what is its purpose? Col. Kellogg asserts that it is primarily concerned with "developing the leadership potential of the individual—which is good for the military, or industry, or business."

"JROTC teaches citizenship and patriotism, respect for the flag, and what a great country this is," observes Sgt. Mason. "A lot of people talk about how sick this country is, but we show that's just a few people."

An Army pamphlet says that the JROTC curriculum is intended to "develop in each cadet: good citizenship, self-reliance, leadership, responsiveness to constituted authority, a knowledge of basic military skills, an appreciation of the role of the U.S. Army in support of national objectives . . ."

What does all this mean in practice? Let's return to O'Connell School to see what a typical class is like:

At the blackboard is Sgt. Ed Adams, who retired from the Army a couple years ago after 22 years of active duty. Often Sgt. Adams wears a Green Beret with his uniform signifying his service (14 years) with the Army's elite Special Forces unit. Today's class is about a "rifle squad attack."

Sgt. Adams draws a circle on the blackboard in which he writes the word "Objective." "The objective is where the enemy is located," he explains. Sgt. Adams proceeds to indicate on the blackboard the various positions the rifle squad will use in its attack on the "objective" —the "assembly area," the "line of departure," and the "forward coordinating line." While advancing on the "objective," Sgt. Adams warns that the attackers must beware of the trip wires to antipersonnel mines, and of "mortar fire from the enemy."

"Is the JROTC just another way for the military to be sure to fill their quotas of volunteer recruits?" asks an anti-militarist.

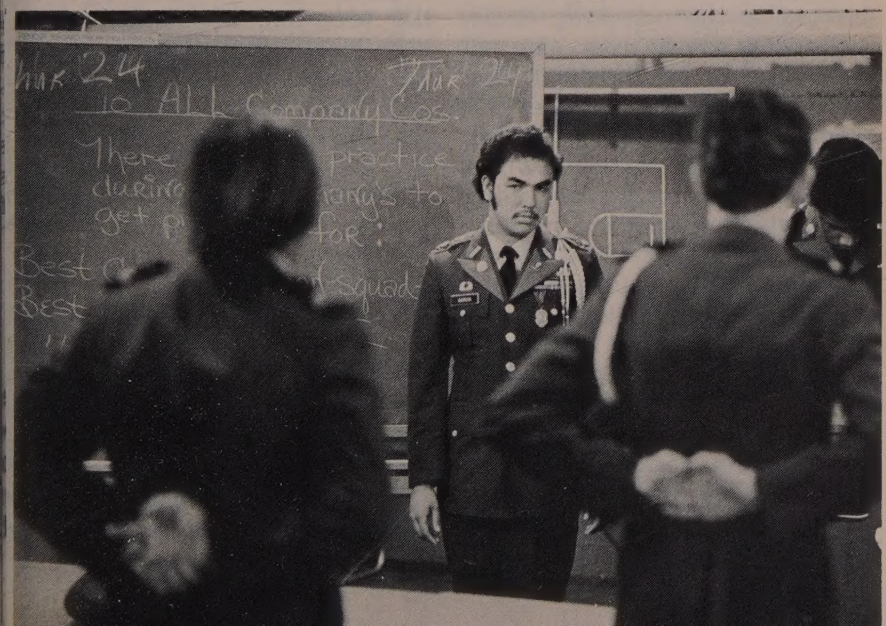
In great detail, and frequently referring to his own experiences in Korea and his three tours of duty in Vietnam, Sgt. Adams describes the various tactics that can be used in attacking the "objective." Included are such weapons as the M-72 anti-tank rocket launcher and machine guns. Finally, Sgt. Adams explains that the squad would launch its final assault on the "objective" to "either kill or capture all enemy personnel."

At the close of the class, the company sergeant—a 15-year-old girl—calls the class to attention: "Sixth period company . . . Atten-hut!" The students rise from their seats and stand erectly with hands to their sides. "Dismissed!" shouts out the company sergeant; and the students file out to attend their seventh period classes.

The following day, that same class watches an Army training film about machine guns. According to the cadets, they have also seen Army films on battlefield tactics, and on the M-14 and M-16 rifles. Sgt. Adams says the films are "from various Army forts—the finest training academies in the world."

Most of the JROTC cadets' instruction will be devoted to classes like the above or to drills. At O'Connell School, the cadets are constantly practicing for

Cadet First Lt. Walter Garcia inspects fellow JROTC students at John O'Connell Vocational High School in San Francisco.



Before their new uniforms arrived, JROTC women at O'Connell drilled in their street clothes.

their drill competitions. Frequently, entire class periods are devoted to the marching drills.

Students themselves give all the orders during the drills. Ben Rosario, 17-year-old Cadet Lt. Colonel at O'Connell High School, explains: "In ROTC you have got to get used to yelling and giving orders. But it takes time. I was embarrassed when I first gave orders. People laugh if you make mistakes."

When the young cadets get accustomed to giving orders, they assume most of the responsibility for running the program: "The students run the program. Sgt. Adams, he's more like an advisor," claims Ben.

Even critics of JROTC are impressed with this aspect of the program. Marie Larson, a high school teacher in San Francisco, remarks: "A big drawing factor for Junior ROTC is the responsibility it gives the kids. It's something they can be proud of. When kids are given responsibility in regular classes, they really dig it. But that doesn't happen much in every class."

JROTC opponents do not feel this justifies a military program in the schools, however. Barry Nemiroff, who works for the American Friends Service Committee in San Francisco, a Quaker-related agency, expresses his feelings: "All the

"JROTC teaches citizenship, patriotism, respect for the flag, and what a great country this is," reports the sergeant.

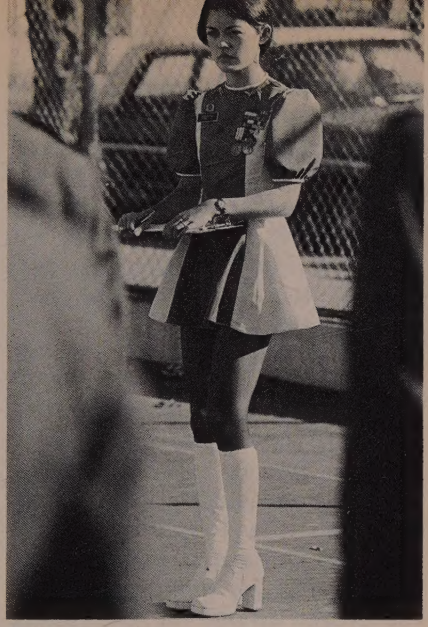
good things in the JROTC program — leadership, responsibility, and physical education — should be incorporated into all forms of the school curriculum. That should be normal, not paid for by an outside entity like the U.S. Department of Defense."

Furthermore, Nemiroff continues: "If uniforms and medals are needed to achieve dignity and self-worth, then the schools are missing the point."

At least once a week, the cadets dress in their uniforms. On days of a drill competition, the students seem to take special care with their appearance: Boys with long hair tuck it in under their hats. Some help each other adjust their neckties.

At O'Connell School, the students are issued M-14 rifles for the drill competitions. The judges—all student cadets—decide which class period is the best marching drill unit.

One of the judges is Rochelle Fretty, a serious-looking cadet, dressed in the girls' uniform: a blue-and-white mini-skirted



Rochelle Fretty may become her school's top cadet officer next year.

dress with blue puffed sleeves, and high white boots. Cadet Lt. Colonel Rosario speculates that she may get his job next year as the school's top cadet. "She's pretty strict with these guys."

A couple years ago, Rochelle would not have been in JROTC, let alone be a candidate for the school's top cadet position. Only recently did the military begin encouraging female participation in JROTC. As a result of the recent changes, female enrollment has grown tremendously. This year in the San Francisco units, more than a third of all JROTC students are girls. To Col. Kellogg, the cause for the change was "the onset of

women's lib. It's just a natural outgrowth of the times."

Sgt. Adams feels that the new girl cadets are fitting in nicely to the program: "Some of the girls didn't want to use the weapons, but most of them wanted to. And they are very enthusiastic about it."

One JROTC girl who seems "enthusiastic" about the weapons is Margie Paulsen, a senior at San Francisco's Lowell High School. At an all-city riflery competition held at the shooting range at the Presidio, a local U.S. Army base, Margie won a huge trophy for having the highest score in one of the firing positions. Margie is particularly proud because, "last year they didn't allow girls to participate."

Margie joined JROTC "mostly for the shooting. I enjoy that." Besides her regular class time in JROTC, she spends most of her free time in "RO"—as she calls it. Her school, like the others in the city, has its own shooting range. "I get to practice every day for about an hour."

Even though few JROTC students become as proficient at riflery as Margie, all practice firing the .22 caliber rifle as a regular part of their instruction. One supporter of the JROTC program, N.Y. State Assemblyman Costigan, expressed the need for weapons training in these terms: "Military training without weapons is like a picnic without marshmallows." Almost a fifth of the cadet's time is devoted to marksmanship.

Although the .22 caliber rifle is normally the only weapon the JROTC cadet learns to fire, cadets are given lectures, films, or demonstrations about the use of a variety of other military weapons. The first-year JROTC cadet's manual includes pictures, diagrams, and descriptions of the three basic Army rifles (M-1, M-14, and M-16) as well as of various types of grenade launchers. The second-year cadet's manual offers a similar presentation on hand grenades, anti-tank rockets, machine guns, recoilless rifles, mortars, artillery howitzers, and anti-personnel/anti-tank mines.

To further expose the cadets to the realities of military life, they are taken on field trips to nearby naval and army installations. John Stansfield, 17, from Lowell High School, tells of how his unit went to Ft. Ord for several days during last spring

"A big drawing factor for JROTC is the responsibility it gives the kids," says a teacher. "They run the program, which doesn't often happen in other classes."

vacation: "They teach you about wilderness survival, and you go through an obstacle course. We even shot regular service rifles like the M-16."

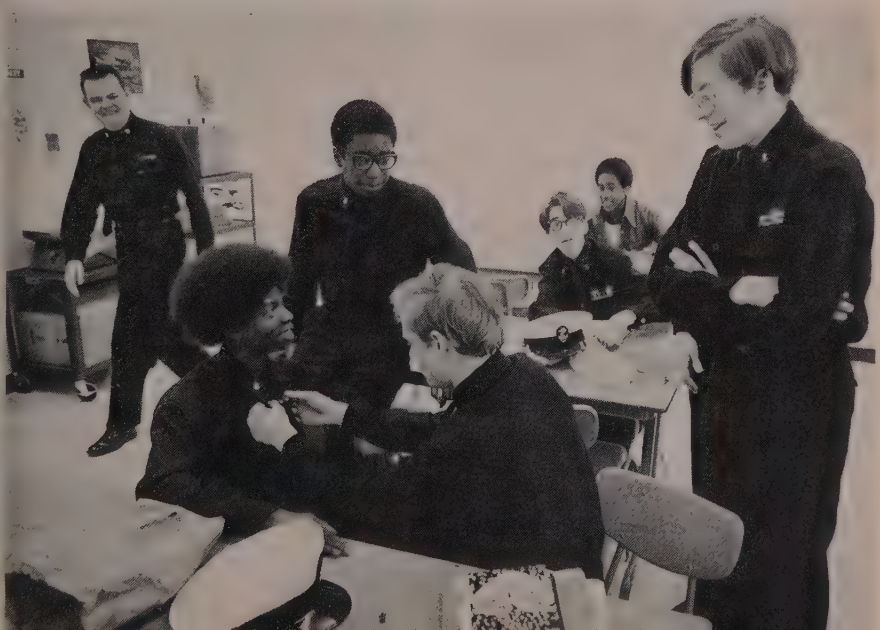
Michael Salanoa, from Galileo, also got to shoot an M-16 when his school went on a field trip to Camp Roberts. (An M-16 rifle is a semi-automatic weapon capable of firing several hundred bullets a minute. It was used extensively by the U.S. in Vietnam.) "I shot a M-16 one time, and a M-60 machine gun, and a grenade launcher," explains 15-year-old Michael. "The grenade launcher is what the cops use in riots except they use dummy bullets."

Supporters of JROTC are proud of the effect the military discipline has on other aspects of the cadets' lives. Col. Kellogg put it simply, "The boys in Junior ROTC are not the troublemakers in the neighborhoods."

Cadet Rosario claims that "some of the kids who come into ROTC are punks." How does JROTC change that? "When a kid comes late to class, other classes let it slide," Ben explains, "but in ROTC, boys have to do push-ups and the girls do jumping jacks."

Another JROTC cadet at O'Connell, Porfi Coca, indicates another aspect of the discipline: "If kids mess up in school, the

From the background, Lt. Commander John Rockett watches his class at McAteer High School tidy up their uniforms for inspection.



At the Presidio Army Base, cadets from the Bay Area compete in riflery for awards for best marksmanship in various categories.

teachers go to Sgt. Adams. He straightens them out even better than the parents do."

Sgt. Dorsey Griffin, of Galileo High School, describes it in these terms: "Cadets are more easy to control. You've got better rapport with ROTC than with a regular academic class. Discipline is what we teach. Also, obedience: how to follow orders. Young people need more discipline. Not necessarily from a military sense of discipline. Since World War II, families don't have very much discipline at home. If we taught discipline then we would not have as many muggings, car thefts, etc."

Some high school teachers notice the effect of JROTC on the students. Teacher Bob Glick remarks, "Junior ROTC has a sobering effect on the kids."

Another teacher, Alberta Maged, says, "JROTC really fulfills needs that kids have. The only other program that is comparable is the Black Muslims."

"One of the drawbacks of ROTC is that some of the kids let it go to their heads," notes Cadet Coca of O'Connell. "They start acting like soldiers or something."

"When I wear my Navy uniform to school," Clinton Cooper comments, "we get laughed at a lot by students and even by some teachers." Clinton's friend, Ken

"Military training without weapons is like a picnic without marshmallows," observes a state legislator.

Thomas, adds: "Someone called me a policeman this morning."

However, such incidents are not commonplace. Because JROTC is voluntary in most schools, most other students and teachers adopt a kind of live-and-let-live attitude about it. Marie Larson says: "You can be in ROTC or be on the yearbook staff. That's how most people view it."

"It's never been a very popular program," observes Ralph Kauer, Assistant Superintendent of Schools for San Francisco. He points out that there are only about 1400 kids in JROTC in San Francisco out of more than 19,000 school students.

As the number of JROTC units has expanded across the U.S., opposition to it has increased from persons outside of the schools. When the Army tried to establish a JROTC unit in Smithsburg, Md., they were blocked by a coalition of concerned persons led by Rev. Norman Cain of the local Church of the Brethren. Pastor Cain's objection was based on his religious beliefs: "Military training in high schools is incompatible with the ideal of Christian love and nonviolence. . . It is a sordid and tragic commentary when citizens and churchpeople . . . attempt to live out their dreams of grandeur and glory by making of their children instruments of war rather than instruments of peace."

Margie Paulsen, a senior at Lowell High School, won a trophy for the highest score in one of the firing positions.

Other opponents feel that military training in the schools cannot be reconciled with certain democratic ideals. In Salem, Ore., a group of women and church leaders expressed this concern to their local board of education when an Air Force

JROTC unit was proposed. Because of JROTC's "authoritarian style of leadership"—the drills, the uniforms, the giving and following of orders—they felt that the "right to dissent and freedom of inquiry, essential ingredients of education in a democracy" would not be respected. The Salem board of education agreed with them and rejected the JROTC program.

Expressing a similar uneasiness about the growth of JROTC, the New York *Times* stated editorially: "The American public schools ought not emulate totalitarian societies by promoting the militarization of children—even on a voluntary basis. . ."

When ROTC is made compulsory by a public school, is this an infringment on the legal rights and religious freedom of individual students? A young conscientious objector and a student at Central High School in Memphis, Tenn., won his plea in federal courts when school officials denied him a diploma because he did not take compulsory ROTC.

"Does the military have the ability and the right to tell people what to believe and how to be a good citizen?" asks Richard Malishchak in his recent booklet, "Military Training for 14-Year-Olds."* Is being a good soldier the only way of being a good citizen? And where are the democratic rights of the loyal opposition to express dissent to a corrupt authority?

In San Francisco, Col. James Kellogg sees no inherent conflict between the military and democracy. "After all, our country is based on the civilian-soldier concept. That's what has made us a great nation. It goes back to the Revolutionary War when the citizen grabbed his musket and defended his country against old George III."

Taking sharp issue with Col. Kellogg's statement, Barry Nemiroff responds, "Junior ROTC has nothing to do with the concept of a civilian-soldier. Even in the Revolutionary War, the Minutemen only picked up their muskets when their homes were in great danger. And they picked up their plows again when the danger was passed. They were not trained from the age of 14 in offensive military tactics."

To summarize his point, Barry concludes: "Junior ROTC is a training ground for a generation of professional soldiers. If there's anything this world does not need, it's another generation of people preparing for war." □

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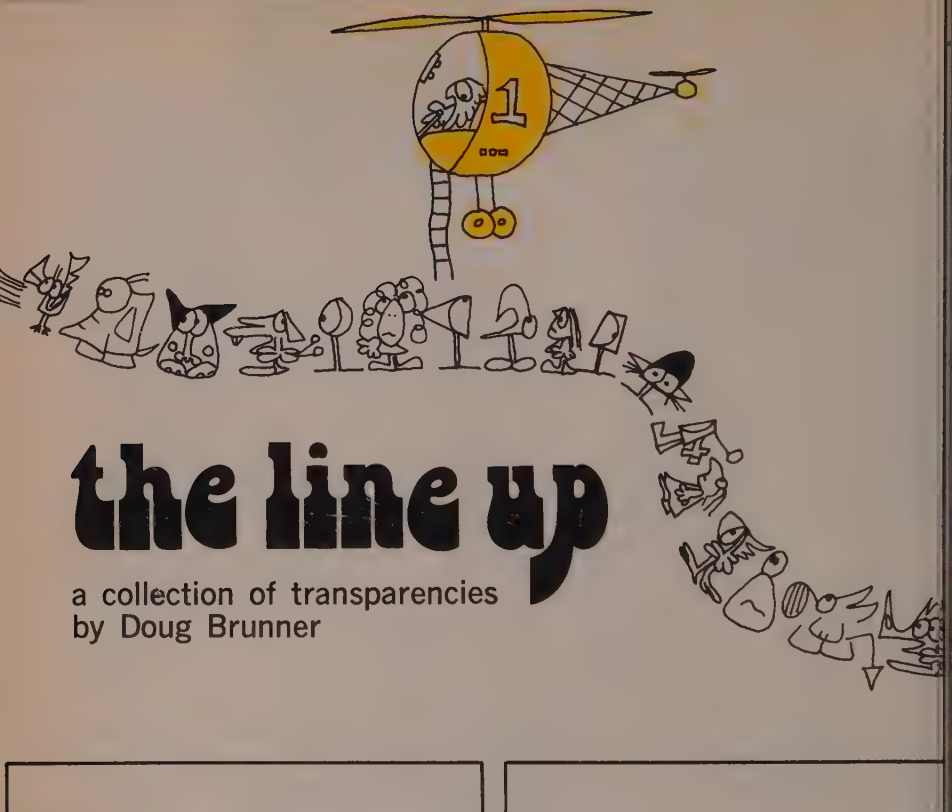
"It's tragic," says one minister, "when citizens and churchmen make their children instruments of war rather than instruments of peace."



the line up

a collection of transparencies
by Doug Brunner

© 1974 Doug Brunner

the energy crisis has made us realize . . .

we are too dependent on individual cars

that we use more energy than we need

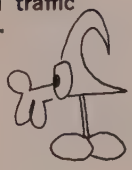
and it's ruining our environment

actually it's an identity crisis

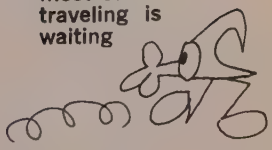
i've waited to buy tickets for trains . . .

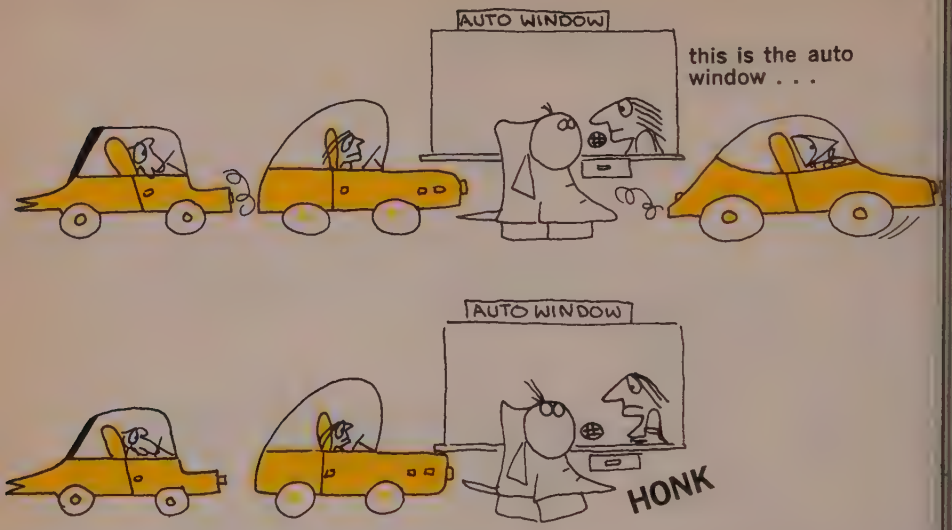
i've waited for jets to take off . . .

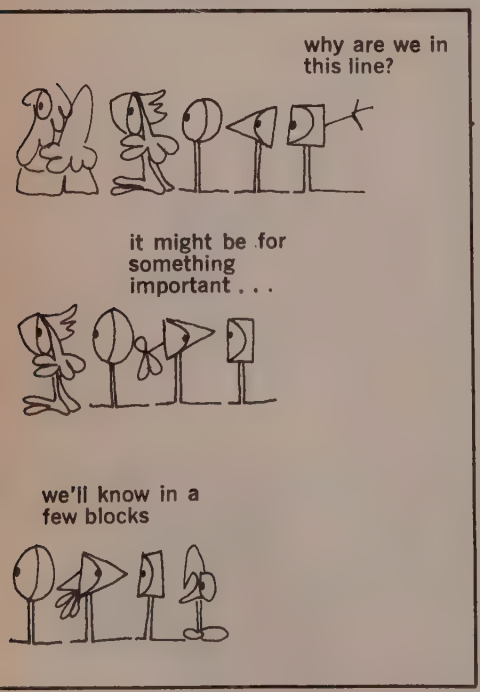
i wait in traffic jams . . .

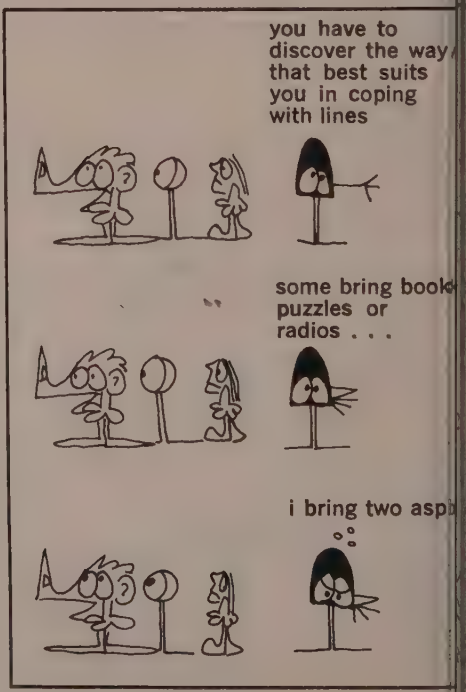


most of our traveling is waiting

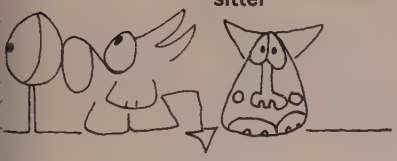



AUTO WINDOW
this is the auto window . . .
AUTO WINDOW
HONK


why are we in this line?
it might be for something important . . .
we'll know in a few blocks


you have to discover the way that best suits you in coping with lines
some bring books puzzles or radios . . .
i bring two aspi

i'm a space-age sitter



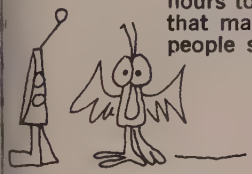
i'm being paid to tend someone's space in line

the cost of food keeps rising so much . . .

that i can't afford a starvation diet anymore

we're in line to see the movie "the exorcist"

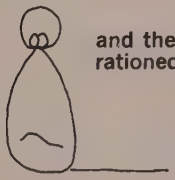
hours to see a movie that makes some people sick . . .



there are lines to the bathrooms too

things are getting bad . . .

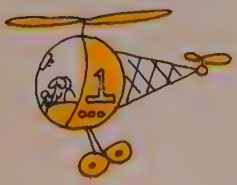
i went to a smorgasbord



and the food was rationed

traffic is very heavy on the expressway going into town

i would strongly recommend you avoid it

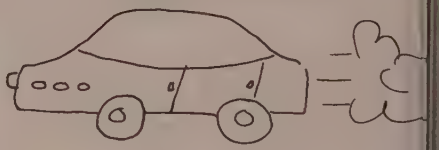


take route 33 instead . . .

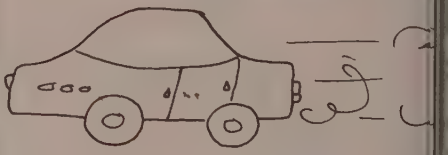
up here, there is a tendency to play god . . .

here i am doing my part by being in a car pool

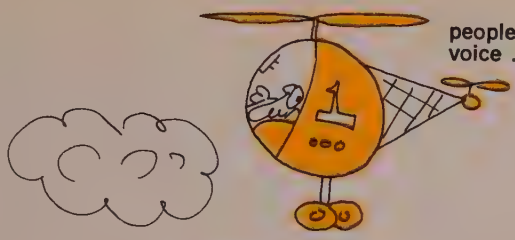
but i'm still in a jam



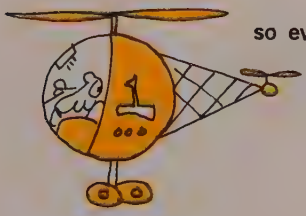
sure, there's not as much traffic on the roads . . .



now we're all squeezed into my car


people know me by my voice . . .

but i want them to feel close to me


so every once in awhile

i make a personal appearance

CONRACK

JON VOIGHT PORTRAYS A WHITE TEACHER IN A RAMSHACKLE SOUTHERN SCHOOLHOUSE WITH AN ALL BLACK STUDENT BODY

By Lewis Archibald

Early last summer in the seaside community of Brunswick, Georgia, a cast and crew got together to put on film the story of a white schoolteacher's year among a group of virtually illiterate black children. For Director Martin Ritt ("Sounder" and "Hud") this story is "probably my most personal film." It's the latest in a long career of socially-oriented movies, many of which have dealt with the issues of race relations and the conflicts of minority groups.

"Conrack" is based on the true life experiences of teacher Pat Conroy as recorded in his recent book, *The Water Is Wide.* The film's title comes from the way the school children mispronounced Conroy's name. Jon Voight ("Midnight Cowboy" and "Deliverance") plays the fictional Conroy.

Basically the movie is, as Voight says, "a love story about a man and 21 kids." The kids all live on one of those small back-in-a-corner islands that lurk in among the swamps and reeds along parts of the Southern half of the East Coast, and are all the more depressing because, though they don't look apart from anything, they really are. As a result, the kids don't even know they're on the East Coast or that they live in the U.S., or, for that matter, what the East is. They live on an island but they can't swim. Nor can they read. Nor count. Nor in several cases recite the alphabet. This is what teacher Conroy found in actuality when he took the job in the late 60's, and this is what the film presents. Only the locale has been moved a bit: from South Carolina down the coast to Georgia.

There, in what is normally a fishing camp, the film-makers put up their island village, sometimes converting existing structures to what would be suitable, often building from scratch. A cinder-block storage area for boats gets a new wooden facing, a terribly rusty screen door (the old kind that always bounces back three times before closing for good) and windows so aged they could still be made of isinglass. And, presto, it's a perfect country store exterior. A farmhouse gets a steeple and a new doorway that goes nowhere, and instantly it has religious respectability.

The two-room ramshackle schoolhouse has never seen much paint. Nor much soap and water either. The schoolteacher's little home is nestled in so snugly between a row of pines that the roots from one tree serve as the

Lewis Archibald, a free-lance writer from New York, has written for *Show* magazine and other film publications.

"I WAS A LITTLE WORRIED WITH THE NOTION OF A WHITE TEACHER TEACHING BLACK CHILDREN," SAYS DIRECTOR RITT. "I KNEW SOME BLACKS WOULD CONSTRUE IT AS A WHITE JESUS."

Director Martin Ritt discusses the film with Jon Voight.

steps up to the front porch.

Some things remain unchanged about the place: the tiny little crabs with one big claw that scuttle up and down the mud flats from their tiny holes to the water; the clouds of sea gulls that suddenly rise and just as suddenly swoop down upon a meadow; and the great multi-pronged live oak trees—the most impressive thing on the set and maybe in all of Georgia—with their trunks thicker than some of the buildings they surround and the strands of grey moss hanging out of their branches like shrouded banners.

Amidst all this last June and July, Pat Conroy's story began unfolding once again. It is not for any who may have been looking for "The Sound of Music," Southern-style. Nor is it another liberal do-gooder tale about a potential "Lord Bountiful" come to dispense educational largesse among the poor. For one thing the character of Conroy himself—at least as depicted in the film—has been through all that and a lot more. Asked at one point just what he's doing on the island, Conrack has a rather direct and moving answer: "I used to wear Brylcream in my hair and chuck watermelons at black kids and call 'em niggerheads. Then I did a 360 degree turn—and if a black man handed me a bucket of cow urine and told me to drink it to rid my soul of the stench of racism, I'd only have asked him for a straw. Now, I'm just teaching school."

Nor does the film shunt opposing viewpoints. When Conrack objects to the tough overly-hard discipline of the school's black principal, that durable lady answers him with a line that should give us all a pause or two about the state of today's equality: "I'm makin 'em tough," she says, "because it is tough. I don't have your advantages. I've always known I was colored. When I was a Negro, I knew I was colored. Now that I'm black, I know which color that is, too."

In spite of and because of such opposition Conrack's rapport with his kids slowly grows, as does his determination to give them something "to cross the river with," some education, practical information or just plain determination that will help them to improve their lot. He teaches them to play football (getting rather mangled in the process), introduces them to the joys of a Tyrone Power swashbuckler, brings in a portable record player, puts on Beethoven and Brahms and even succeeds in getting the kids to take swimming lessons.

His most ambitious achievement—and his eventual downfall—is a glorious Halloween expedition across the river that for the first time allows Conrack's class to savor all the glutinous joys of Trick or Treat night. Because of that, however, he is fired by school officials, outraged at the way he bends their rules. Conrack pleads with them, he goes to court, he even hires a truck and parades around the county seat to argue his cause. It doesn't work. Mournfully his class gathers on the dock to watch him leave; as his boat chugs away from the island, they turn on the record player, and it blares out Beethoven.

Realistic problems swirl

THE KIDS DON'T EVEN KNOW THEY LIVE ON THE EAST COAST OR WHAT THE EAST IS. THEY CAN'T SWIM, NOR READ THEIR COUNTY AND SOME CAN'T RECITE THE ALPHABET

through "Conrack." "I was a little worried with the notion of a white teacher coming into this outlying section and teaching black children," Ritt says. "I knew some blacks would construe it as a white Jesus. So I was determined to make it so that the character would never seem omniscient, never seem too know-it-all."

Voight concurs even more heavily, maintaining that his greatest challenge in the role has been to create enough of a balance to show audiences how much the teacher learns from the kids as well as how much

he teaches them: "I've been fighting very hard for a balance. The character must somehow change, adjust, become less sure of himself. He's so cocky at first. But then he becomes more involved with the beauty of the children and their honesty. I don't want him to be condescending, though I'm not so sure of myself as he is. Real advice comes from a great deal of listening and a great deal of saying, 'Well, as far as I can see . . .' and sort of muddling it through. There's almost none of that consideration in the script. The weight of Conrack's answers comes from his particular culture with no consideration for another culture. He's wrong most of the time not to consider another culture." Particularly when that culture is as fascinating as these kids turn out to be.

Both Ritt and Voight agree that what has vitalized this film and, to a certain degree themselves, are the 21 kids, all nonprofessionals, all recruited after a great deal of examination and intuition from the Brunswick area and all of them equipped with enough pure get-up-and-go, pound for pound, to take care of this and any future energy crisis. If it could only be harnessed.

For example, take a hot and remarkably airless day in Georgia. The cicadas are stirring up a loud roar by ten in the morning (and it's only mid-July). The dust on the road is about an inch thick and the sun just resolutely stays up there blasting at you. There's not even some haze in sight.

The set is a fairly usual set for a Hollywood movie. The crew is mostly muttering about how soon they'll be able to fly home. Those who have equipment to protect try not to drip too much sweat on it. Some try to find a spot free of sun and ticks for a little snooze. Marty Ritt, his moustache dripping a bit, wearing his perpetual jump suit, moves about setting up a shot.

Then the kids arrive for one of their scenes, and it's pandemonium. If the lunch tent is open yet, or if any other kind of food is nearby, it's engulfed almost immediately. If the kids are in costume while engulfing, well, the wardrobe lady immediately runs out of clean sponges.

These kids are all over. They revitalize the place. And nothing fazes them. One day they were giggling in anticipation because that afternoon they were to shoot a quick scene in a soda fountain and it was to be vanilla shakes, root beer floats and strawberry sodas all afternoon long. It didn't work out that way. Ritt did the shot in two takes, and that was it. Were the kids disconsolate? No way. Five minutes later four of the boys

had discovered some motor scooters for hire next door and were trying to persuade Voight to go for a ride with them.

Indeed the kids are all over Voight, at his own request. "My father was a genius with kids," he says. "A real genius. He found great comfort in kids, and I do too. I took this part because I found little pieces of things that I thought I could do well, being my father's son. Things I picked up from him. So I felt that if I had a bunch of kids around me, I could probably make a lot of things work. And that turned out to be accurate."

"When I walk into a scene with those kids," Voight continues, "I feel very comfortable with them. They're my friends. And the scenes between us have been very personal. I just hope the film's focus stays on the kids as much as possible. I keep trying to throw focus on the kids because while the script tells the story of one man, the one man is really 22 people. The major portion of the film is the side that is the children, and the children are magnificent."

Indeed Voight hazards the guess that "a valuable film—maybe much more valuable than 'Conrack'—would be to make a documentary following those kids around. They tell you about a lot of things. They jump into life with both hands and their head. They just dive right in."

So, when it comes to the kids, does Voight. He's open with them. He grins a lot; he whoops a lot. On the spur of the moment he'll take a bunch roller skating or swimming or something else when the day's shooting is done. "We're friends," he says; it's a simple declarative sentence.

What makes this all the more interesting is that away from the kids Voight is much more reserved, much more quiet and much more steady, with little of the bravura and conjured-up personality that many a major actor affects. There is a ruddy tan from the Georgia sun that covers his nose and cheeks leaving only the squint lines around his eyes red or pink and looking like angry arrows. For the most part Voight seems to have a grasp of himself, a grasp on his life, a grasp on how to handle things. But he doesn't seem to have had it too long, and he's still exploring it. Which may be why only the kids in this film seem to open him up all the way.

"I'm not looking to be good in the movie," he says. "If the kids come off good, I'll come off good too."

Director Ritt is a little more detached. He pretends to a certain dislike of the kids, and says it's the last time he'll work with a bunch of youngsters. But the kids have gotten beyond this pose. They call him "Uncle Marty," and he does nothing to stop it. They stand by him and talk to him and he doesn't interrupt them. At the end of the film he gave each one a medallion in remembrance of the movie: "Anything else," he said, "would either be destroyed or eaten up in one hour."

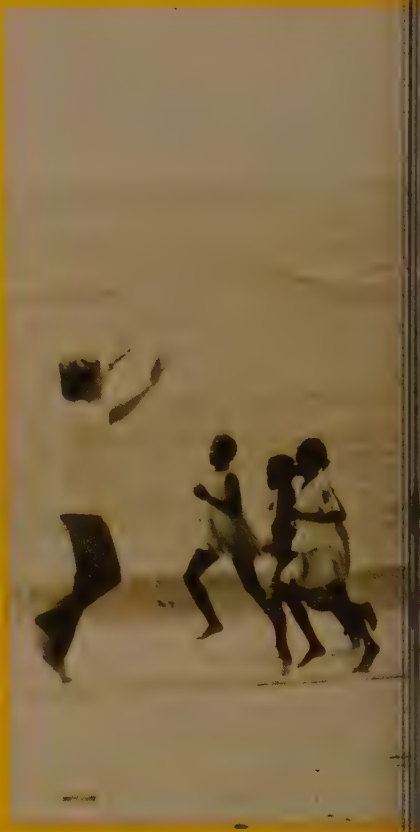
And Ritt feels the children have made an enormous contribution to the movie. "I know the picture has affected me in a way which I like," he admits. "I enjoy going in to watch the rushes. There's a kind of zaniness and fun in the picture which is close

to me."

Illustration? "Well," says Ritt "there's one very funny moment where Voight is teaching the kids about yoga. And in the yoga scene, one position was indicated which Jon couldn't do. He couldn't get his feet into it. So, I put him on a little hill, and of course, as he tried to do it, he rolled over backwards. Naturally, the kids went sky high when they saw it. They had a ball, and he had a ball. There's a lot of that in the movie. There's a lot of behavior that comes out of playing the scene correctly. Except the scene doesn't end there. We just go on. Into that behavior, the reactions, whatever. And it's priceless, because it's real. Sure, it's directed in the sense that it's on the right track. But those kids keep going on their own impulse. No director could have conceived some of the marvelous things they do. What I did was to place them in the proper frame of mind for it to happen—and it happened."

Shooting finishes for the day. The kids move off toward the wardrobe tent, and suddenly quiet is back. The crew members don't talk much as they quickly pack up. It's still too hot. From the distance you can hear the kids shouting as they change their clothes and clamber into the bus for town. The film's almost over. So what's going to happen when everyone breaks up and goes on their way? What about the relationship between Voight and the kids?

"Our work together is virtually over," Voight acknowledges,



"but we're friends. If they ever show up in Los Angeles or if I ever bump into them again, they know that I'm a friend of theirs. It's been a very happy thing in their lives and my life. We've all benefited from it. We're all better for it. Sometimes when you're going through good times, you don't appreciate them. I think we have." □

All photos used with permission of 20th Century-Fox

THE MAGIC PORTION OF THE FILM IS THE SIDE THAT IS THE CHILDREN. AND THE CHILDREN ARE MAGNIFICENT.

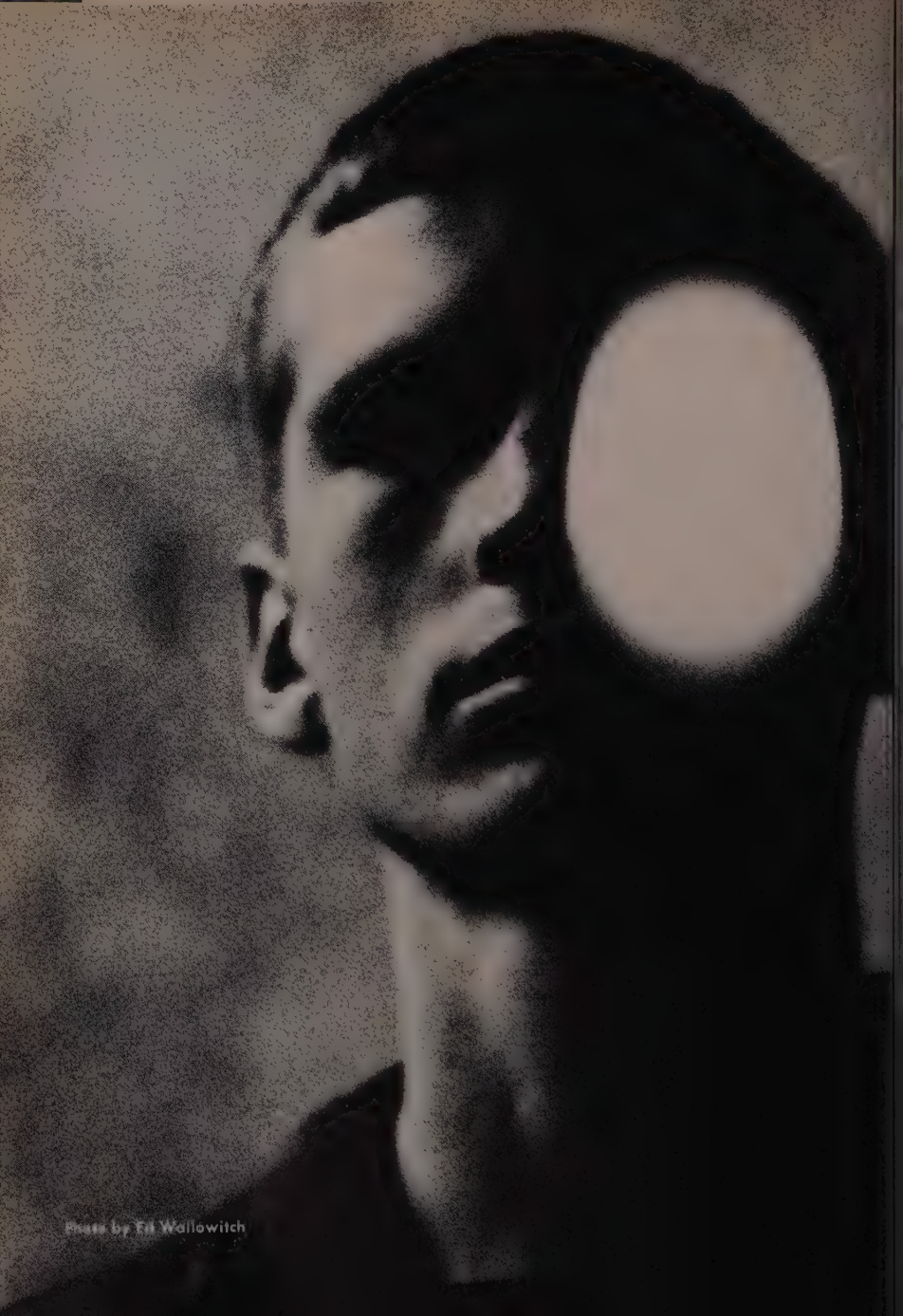


Photo by Ed Wallowitch

WHO IS THE PUPIL?
A child of God,
not a tool of the state.

WHO IS THE TEACHER?
A guide,
not a guard.

WHAT IS THE FACULTY?
A community of scholars,
not a union of mechanics.

WHO IS A PRINCIPAL?
A master of teaching
not a master of teachers.

WHAT IS LEARNING?
A journey,
not a destination.

WHAT IS DISCOVERY?
Questioning the answers,
not answering the questions.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?
Discovering ideas,
not covering content.

WHAT IS THE GOAL?
Opened minds,
not closed issues.

WHAT IS THE TEST?
Being and becoming,
not remembering and reviewing.

WHAT IS SCHOOL?
Whatever we choose to make it.

BY ALLAN A. GLATTHORN

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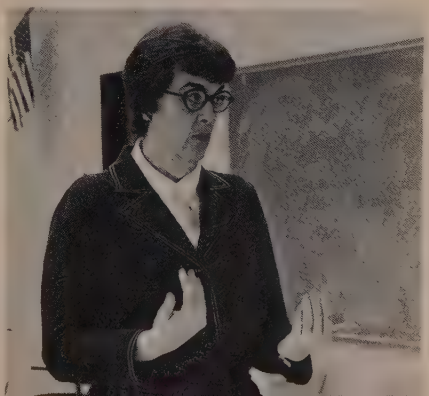
HANDS THAT SPEAK

By Laura-Jean Gilbert

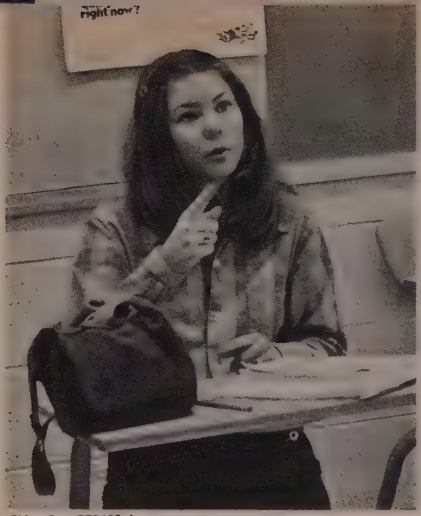
"A deaf girl worked in the same place where I did," explained Alison Bassett, "That's when I got interested in sign language. No one could really communicate with her; she was shut off." Alison, who is a 17-year-old senior at Parkdale High School in Prince Georges County, Md., is now studying sign language for credit, as an elective English course at her school. "I've taken two previous sign classes—evenings at the University of Maryland and at Prince Georges Community College," she smiles.

It wasn't always possible to take such an interestingly different course at Parkdale. Last year sign language classes were added to the curriculum on an experimental basis at the urging of a group of parents. (These parents had children who were both hearing and deaf and felt it would be good if their hearing children and their friends could learn how to communicate with their deaf brothers and sisters.)

Ms. Berg, herself deaf, teaches high school students how to communicate in sign language.



Laura-Jean Gilbert is Director of Publications for Gallaudet College, Washington, D.C.



Cindy Wilkinson, 16

Nils Winkler, 17

The school board of Prince Georges County was receptive to the idea, and the principal at Parkdale, Dr. G. Allen Sager, was willing to try out the classes at his school. So, on January 5, 1973, with a volunteer teacher from Gallaudet College, the world's only accredited liberal arts college for deaf students, sign language classes began at Parkdale. Five students showed up that first morning, but within two weeks the enrollment had grown to 18.

After that experimental and successful first semester, Prince Georges County decided to continue the sign language classes at Parkdale, and this fall hired Ms. Betty Berg, who is herself deaf, to teach the classes.

The language of sign which was brought to the United States from France is a method of communication which developed informally and by necessity among deaf persons. It has been formalized and refined through the years and in the United States and Canada includes a fingerspelling alphabet for letters and numbers, plus approximately 1500 to 2000 formal signs which stand for some of the basic nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions of our everyday speech. Many deaf persons use signs and some fingerspelling to communicate with each other in a form which is known as Ameslan (American Sign Language). Signs and fingerspelling can also be used in combination to speak in precise English.

At Parkdale, Ms. Berg taught two beginning sign language

"I would like to be an interpreter," states Cindy. "My favorite sign is 'spring'—it reminds me of a flower blooming."

Nils says, "I'm taking sign so I can communicate better with my sister who is deaf. I didn't know anything except the alphabet before taking this class."

"I have already interpreted for many things," interjects Dawn. "I want very much to be an interpreter."

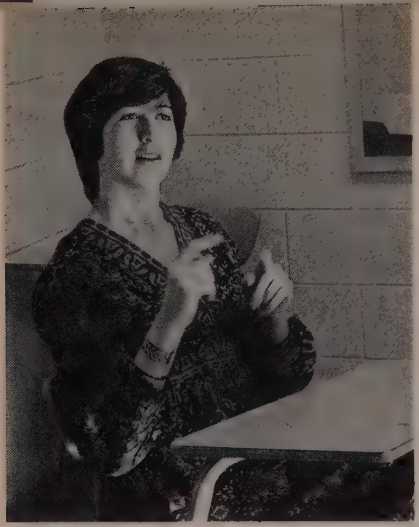
Valerie adds, "My favorite sign is the one for 'turtle.' I love learning a new way to communicate."

Dawn MacFarlane, 15
Valerie Lewis, 17

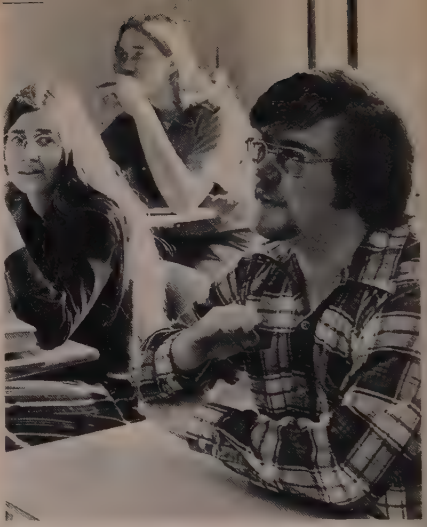
classes this past semester. Her first period class had 17 students and her second period class 13 students. Now, during the second semester she has been teaching an intermediate sign language class at Parkdale and is also teaching a beginning sign language class at Northwestern High School — another high school in the Prince Georges County School System.

Students apply to take the sign language classes as an elective English class. They are assigned to the class with priority given to students who have a deaf person in their family and, secondly, to students who are interested in working with deaf persons in the future. Dawn MacFarlane, for example, is a 15-year-old sophomore whose nine-year-old brother is deaf and attends the Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick, Md. Dawn is taking the beginning sign language class in order to be able to communicate more easily with her brother and also because she plans to become a teacher of deaf children. But, she now uses the sign language she has learned not only with her little brother, but also with her hearing friends. "I'm so used to signing," she said, "that it's almost a habit. I think it would be great if all schools had at least one class in sign language."

Sign language is a language of natural hand formations, gestures, and pantomime. There is such an obvious relationship between many signs and their meaning that almost anyone, hearing or deaf, would understand the sign immediately. For



Alison Bassett, 17



Cindy Easterling, 16
Barry Bordas, 18

example, the sign for "house" is made by placing the tips of your fingers together and then tracing the form of a roof. Repeating that sign several times, moving to the right, is the sign for "city." To sign "across," the little finger edge of the right open hand passes across the back of the left open hand which is facing palm down. Signs for animals are often made by pantomiming the appearance or action of the animal—to sign "monkey" for example you scratch the sides of your body simultaneously with both hands two or three times just above the waist.

Other signs have gradually lost their related meaning and must be consciously learned. The sign for "female" is made by moving the right thumb (with a closed fist) along the right cheek toward the chin. This sign originally indicated a bonnet string, but since women have long since given up bonnets, the sign is no longer an obvious one. Fingerspelling alphabets and some signs differ from country to country, but a deaf person from one country can generally make himself understood by a deaf person from another country. There is a movement to establish an international sign language.

Although Alison Bassett had taken some sign language classes before enrolling in the Parkdale class, most of the other students in Ms. Berg's classes have not formally studied sign language before, although a few of them had learned the fingerspelling alphabet on their own. Alison pointed out that one of the

"In the store where I worked," says Alison, "one deaf man had searched all over for baby pacifiers. I was able to help him."

"I really think other schools should add classes in sign language. It's great!" smiles Cindy.

"I'm a volunteer in the local fire house and ride the ambulance, so if we ever had to help a deaf person, I could understand him or her," adds Barry.

Kathy affirms, "After college, I'd like to go on to graduate school and specialize in deaf education."

Kathy Derry, 18

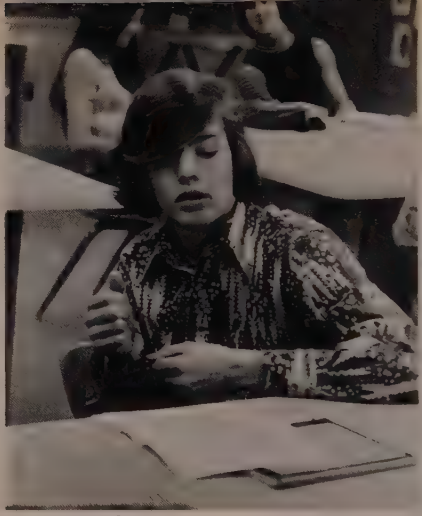
things one learns in studying sign language is how to communicate through concepts. Interestingly, supervisors and administrators in the Prince Georges School System have noted that students in the sign classes have improved in their general use of English, partly, it would seem, because they have begun to think about words and language in a new way.

"I know two deaf persons," said Cindy Easterling, who is a junior, "but I don't see them very often. I'm not able to use the sign language I've learned much outside of class, but I like to practice it by signing along with the radio or TV."

Valerie Lewis, like several others in the class, has expressed interest in becoming proficient enough at sign language to be able to be an interpreter. She has been able to use the sign language she has learned to assist deaf persons who have come into the store where she works by giving them information about what they are buying.

Learning sign language gives the Parkdale students not only a new communication skill, but also an insight into some of the problems of deafness and a sensitivity to deaf people. Deafness is not a visible handicap. You can't tell by looking at a person whether he is deaf or has a hearing handicap (unless he or she is wearing a hearing aid). For that reason, deaf persons are often taken for snobs when they do not respond to requests for help or information. Deaf persons are not retarded, nor are they stupid, when they respond

Russell Colmore and Gwen Peterson



Steve Duck

All photos courtesy of Gallaudet College

inappropriately, or not at all, to oral questions. Too often, as was recently pointed out in an article in *U.S. News and World Report*, the phrase, "What's the matter —are you deaf?" is said in irritation, rather than concern. Deafness can also be dangerous, since most of us, in situations of crisis, tend to call out our warning. Deaf people, of course, can't respond to the sound of a fire truck or an ambulance siren.

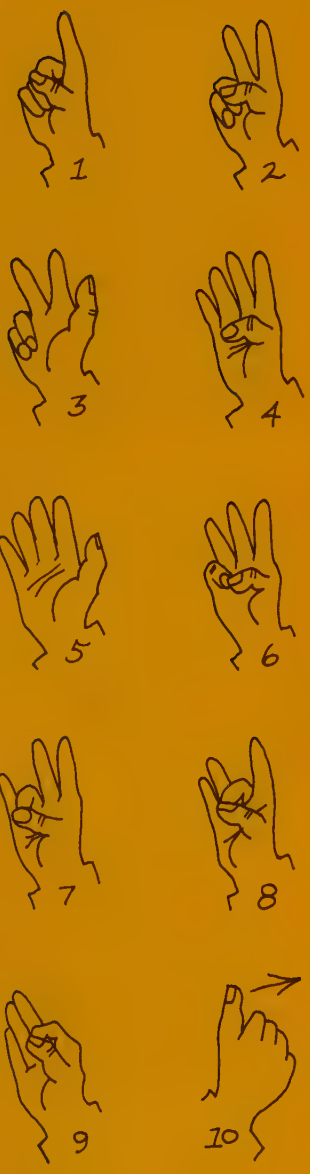
Yet, for all our insensitivity to the problem, deafness itself is no respecter of persons. You probably know someone who is deaf, perhaps a member of your own family. You can be born deaf either because of genetic causes or because of an illness like measles to which your mother may have been exposed during her pregnancy. You can become deaf because of a childhood disease or through an accident. Some persons become deaf because they are exposed to loud noises in their working situations (this happens to airplane mechanics and rock musicians, for example). And, of course, many persons become hard of hearing and/or deaf with the advance of old age. Most deaf persons, especially, persons who became deaf when they were teenagers or older because of sickness or accidents, can speak as easily and as clearly as anyone else. Some persons who were born deaf speak in voices which do not sound "natural" to hearing people. Because they have been made fun of when they were children, or because when they have tried to speak hearing people have acted confused or

At the high schools which are participating in this program of offering sign language, the course is an elective English class, with priority given to those who have a deaf member in their family

impatient, many deaf persons have stopped using their voices . . . but deaf people are not "mute" and most object very strongly to being called deaf-mutes. They consider that term insulting (even worse, of course, is referring to them as "deaf and dumb").

For whatever reason deafness occurs, it creates for the deaf person problems in communication, problems in learning, problems related to the isolation and loneliness that occur when one is cut off from society.

Students at Parkdale High and at Northwestern High are learning sign language, and are learning something about visual, rather than verbal, communication. Moreover, they are learning to be sensitive to other persons—and that's what it's all about. □



Worth Looking Up To

By HERMAN C. AHRENS, JR.

I watched as the laughing students left their chartered bus and mounted the steps to the cathedral. It seemed that to them this was just another stop on their senior class trip to Washington, D.C. I was curious. So I decided to join them.

As we gathered inside, there was just too much to see in one quick glance—beneath our feet was an enormous cross inlaid in a shining marble floor; surrounding us were huge stone pillars reaching to arched ceilings; two stunning stained-glass windows shaped like a rose lifted our eyes; a giant stone pulpit with carved stories was so real it tempted the touch of the beholder; through a decorative wooden screen glowed an altar with its backdrop of a mass of human figures enveloping a statue of Christ; a balloon drifting incongruously on the end of a string was caught on one of the grooved details of the choir stalls.

What is this place?

A greeting from an approaching uniformed guide broke our concentration.

"Welcome to the Washington Cathedral!" And our tour began.

Soon we learned that the pulpit was made of stone from the Canterbury Cathedral in England, and this pulpit was where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., preached his last sermon. In a side bay off the huge nave we saw the burial site of Woodrow Wilson, the only U.S. President buried in Washington,

In preparation for this article, the author was given generous assistance by Virginia Hammond, director of the volunteer guides at the Washington Cathedral.

"The cost of finishing this cathedral is equal to the cost of buying one bomber."

Dedication of the lintel stone on the west end of the Cathedral in 1972.

D.C. Beyond the choir, the two throne-like bishop's seats on either side were evidence of this being the only cathedral in the world to seat two bishops. The main altar is called the Jerusalem Altar because it is made of stones from the same quarry outside Jerusalem that built King Solomon's temple.

The guide was full of stories and facts. Here in the cathedral Leonard Bernstein conducted the National Symphony Orchestra, chorus, and soloists in Haydn's "Mass in Time of War" on the evening of President Nixon's 1973 Inaugural—3000 people crowded inside and nearly 20,000 listened outside, mostly youth. And we heard how in response to the Kent State killings, the Oberlin (Ohio) College Choir and Orchestra had requested the cathedral to let them present a concert there four days after the killings—they wanted to witness in Washington and in this cathedral.

In the War Memorial Chapel, the guide pointed out the needlepoint covering the kneelers done by English women in thanksgiving for U.S. help in World War II—including one needlepoint worked by Queen Mother Elizabeth. Overhead the moon and the footprints of the astronauts were carved for generations to come to mark an historic event of today.

We saw a stained-glass window dominated visually by Jesus as a carpenter, dedicated to "artisans and craftsmen," and donated by the AFL-CIO in memory of labor leaders, Samuel Gompers, William Green, and Philip Murray—a Jew, a Protestant, and a Catholic. On a scaffold was a stone carver chiseling away at a gargoyle—a scene out of the medieval past. As we watched the construction of the unfinished west end, we heard this will be the world's sixth largest cathedral when completed.

There was whimsy there, too. A glimmer came to the guide's eyes as she told how, when you dial the cathedral number (966-3500) on a touch-tone phone, you hear the first seven notes of the hymn, "Jesus Loves Me."

This is no ordinary tourist site, I thought to myself. Naturally, the students took photos, bought souvenirs, mailed home picture postcards, picked up free pamphlets, and asked all sorts of questions of the guides. And so did I.

One young person asked, "When was the building started?"

"The foundation stone was laid in 1907," the guide answers quickly, as if this is a familiar question. "The cathedral's design is inspired by several 14th century English models. This is probably the last structure to be completed according to Gothic construction principles. It's all brick and stone with no structural steel. As with all Gothic cathedrals, it is built in the shape of the cross,

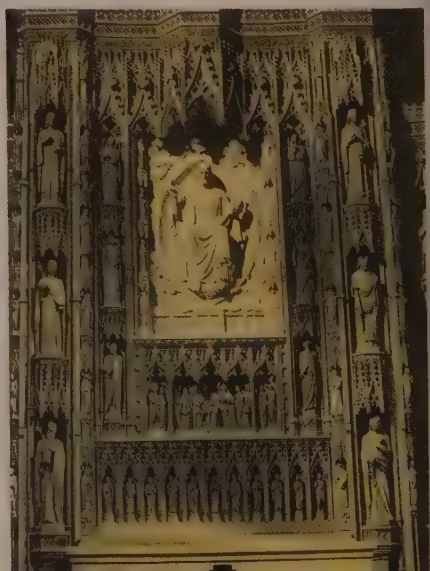
"Art is spirit and spirit will never be squeezed under the machine."

Master carver, Roger Morigi, at work on the south transept entrance to the Cathedral.

The Cathedral's high altar with the newly-installed Christ in Majesty statue.

with the longest section (from the altar through the nave to the narthex) extending generally from east to west, with the arms of the cross, called transepts, extending north and south. Where they meet is called the crossing.

"In the floor of the crossing, you see inlaid in the stone the Jerusalem, or Crusaders', Cross. It is this cathedral's special symbol. Our official name is the Cathedral Church of St. Peter and St. Paul. And so in the north arm of this Jerusalem Cross you see the keys of the kingdom, the em-



blems of St. Peter; the other arm bears St. Paul's book and sword."

A hand goes up. "Has the work on the cathedral been going on continuously all these years?"

"Construction has been interrupted by war and when funds were not available," the guide says. Then she points to various sections of the building as she talks. "You can see that the altar section, the north and south transepts, the central 301-foot tower, and half of the nave have been completed. Yet to be finished are the rest of the nave, the narthex (main entrance), and the two 234-foot west towers. When it is finished, it will be 518 feet long—that's one-tenth of a mile. And since it stands on the city's highest ground, Mount St. Alban, the Gloria in Excelsis Tower is the highest point in Washington—something for this city to look up to."

"When will it be finished?"

"The plan is to complete construction of the nave and narthex by 1976 in time for the national bicentennial celebration," the guide responds. "After that, we hope the two west towers will be finished by 1980. There is pressure to finish as soon as possible, both because of rising building costs and because of the few skilled stone carvers still left in the world."

"How much will it cost?"

"It is estimated that the building so far has cost $20 million and it will require probably $12 million more to complete."

"Where does the money come from?"

"Solely from voluntary gifts from people and organizations who believe in the work and life of this cathedral," says the woman in quiet pride. "It is being built for the nation without any government funds. It is the people's church built by the people."

With concern written on her face, a young woman asks, "Why spend so much money to build an expensive church building when others need help?"

"Yours is a question of conscience and priorities," the guide affirms. "We feel we are building this cathedral as a place of service to the nation and as a means of witness to the conscience of our capital. And someday your great-great-grandchildren will see in this symbol what we aspired to in our generation. It's a low investment for a great return. If you compare costs, the money to finish this cathedral is one-third the cost of building the Rayburn House Office Building in D.C. or equal to the cost of constructing a mile of a multi-lane freeway. Those $12 million will buy one bomber."

Another hand pops up. "Whose church is it?"

"It is everybody's church," is her initial response. "But let me answer that further. First of all, this is the National Cathedral of

"It's everybody's church—people of all beliefs, all ages, all styles of life."

Francis B. Sayre, Jr., Dean of the Cathedral, participates in one of several festive occasions.

the Episcopal Church. Therefore, this is where the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church is installed and has his seat, or **cathedra.** But it is also the seat of the Episcopal Bishop of Washington. But we receive no direct funding from the national church. Second, this cathedral does not serve a local parish or congregation, but it is supported and operated by voluntary groups aided by a paid staff. Third, a wide variety of groups use this building for worship and for all sorts of meetings, including Orthodox, Catho-

lic, Jewish, and Protestant. And the events held here, besides daily worship, vary from high school graduations to ballet performances, musical concerts, drama, scientific and moral forums, demonstrations against racial injustice and war—all of man's expressions of his various understandings of God's way for this world."

The guide felt it is best summarized in a quote from the late Bishop Angus Dun: "It is an Episcopal Church, yes; it is held in trust by the Episcopal Church for that great church to come."

And as we moved about the cathedral, the meaning of "the people of God" and "the fellowship of believers" came alive for me. In the reredos surrounding the Christ in Majesty statue above the main altar are smaller statues of 96 persons who by their lives exemplified the highest ideals of the Christian faith—the disciples of Christ, the Old and New Testament prophets and followers, and the saints of the Christian Church.

"What is a saint?" a child had once asked our guide and before the guide could answer, a second child pointing to a stained-glass window replied, "Someone the sun shines through."

She had spoken more truth than perhaps she realized. Yet this place seemed to inspire such thinking and feeling. Here no one is lonely, yet you can be alone.

Everywhere you turn, in sculpture, mosaics, paintings, tapestries, and stained-glass are Bible stories, creeds, Christian symbols, events of Christ-like behavior, and witnesses of all times—Martin Luther and Pope John XXIII, Calvin and Bonhoeffer, Zwingli and Schweitzer, Bach and Vaughan Williams, King David and Simon Bolivar, Ruth and Jane Addams, Hagar and Sacajawa, Luke and Sir Wilfred Grenfell, John Amos Comenius and Nathan Hale. And buried here are Helen Keller, Cordull Hull, Admiral George Dewey, and other notables. But these are people of the past.

The present and future are alive, too, with people—over a half million visitors each year, or are they pilgrims, like myself? Worshipers abound. The concerned preach. Teachers teach in the schools on the cathedral grounds. Musicians sing praises in the choirs, play the organ, carillon and ten-bell ring, and perform in the concerts in the crossing and on the transept porches in summer festivals. Volunteer guides show hospitality. And the people of special gifts and crafts give to this building.

When our tour group went outside to the studios where the stonecarvers work, our guide expressed concern that stonecarving is a fast-dying art. There are seven stonecarvers now working at $8.57 to $9.68 per hour and they constitute practically all of the

qualified carvers in the U.S. No apprentices are present.

"Why this decline?" we asked Roger Morigi, the cathedral's master carver, who has been at the cathedral 18 years.

"Work is dead," he replies. "People are unwilling to work hard and well. This craft takes patience and devotion and drive. You must never be satisfied. The minute you think you're too good, that's all, you're finished."

Constantine Seferlis, another carver, says, "The art hasn't changed much in centuries, because art is spirit, and spirit will never be squeezed under the machine. I have been at the cathedral for nearly 14 years and I hope to see it finished.

"Artists today feel lost," Seferlis continues. "Because they don't know where they belong, they drop everything and play with forms that don't mean anything, while waiting for a civilization where they have a place. But what we do here at the cathedral is important for our day, because it comes from a time when there was more faith, more belief, more respect for God. What man accomplishes with his life is important—it is what he leaves behind. Here I feel we make history."

Then I recalled the guide's account of the new Christ in Majesty statue above the altar. For years the planners of the cathedral had wanted a statue of Christ whose impact would be powerful enough to carry the full length of the cathedral. As you entered the west end, Christ would be the dominating sight. His presence would catch your eye and be the first focus of your attention.

"We are building a place of service and a witness to the conscience of our nation."

Leonard Bernstein conducts a mass for peace on the evening of President Nixon's 1973 Inaugural.

Three different plaster models of Christ were tried in place over the years before the present design was accepted. And then in Mr. Morigi's studio the model was carved out of three blocks of stone totalling ten tons. After a year of working, it was finished. Then it was lifted by crane through his

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE WASHINGTON CATHEDRAL

studio's roof into the open unfinished section of the nave. A special ramp was built to wheel the statue to the altar area.

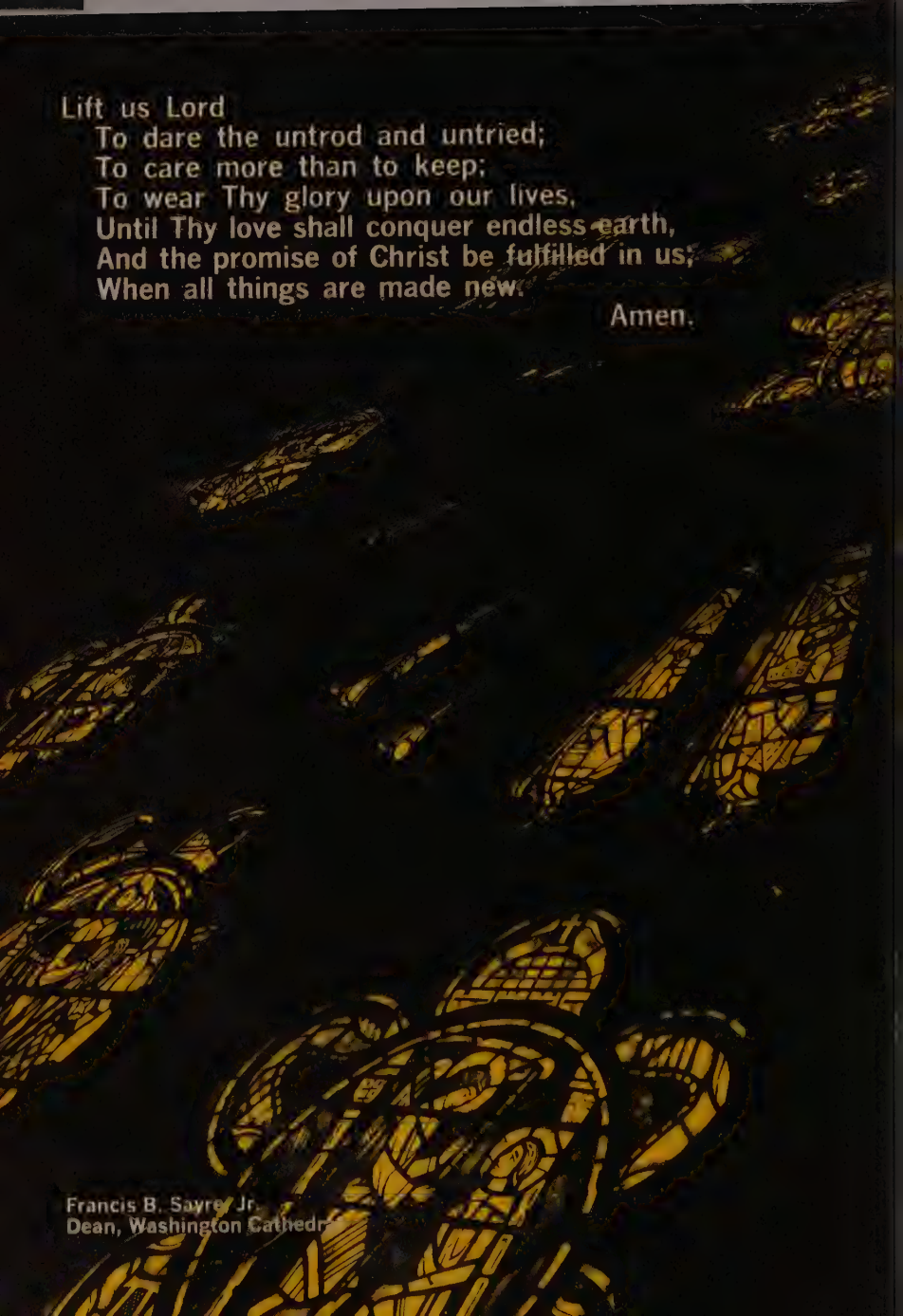
With less than an inch on either side in which to fit and because of the tight squeeze behind the altar, each piece of the statue was then lifted by winch and human muscle. All the carvers, and workers and staff stood around watching breathlessly as the delicate Christ in Majesty was fitted into place. All went well. After years of searching and sweating, the heart of the cathedral fit. Spontaneously, the workers asked the dean of the cathedral to lead them in a prayer of thanksgiving.

Was this what the architect of the cathedral meant when he wrote in 1921: "I hope and pray Washington Cathedral will be so built that it will lift up its towers above the capital of our nation as a glorious symbol of Him, who said, 'I, if I be lifted up above the earth, will draw all men unto me' "?

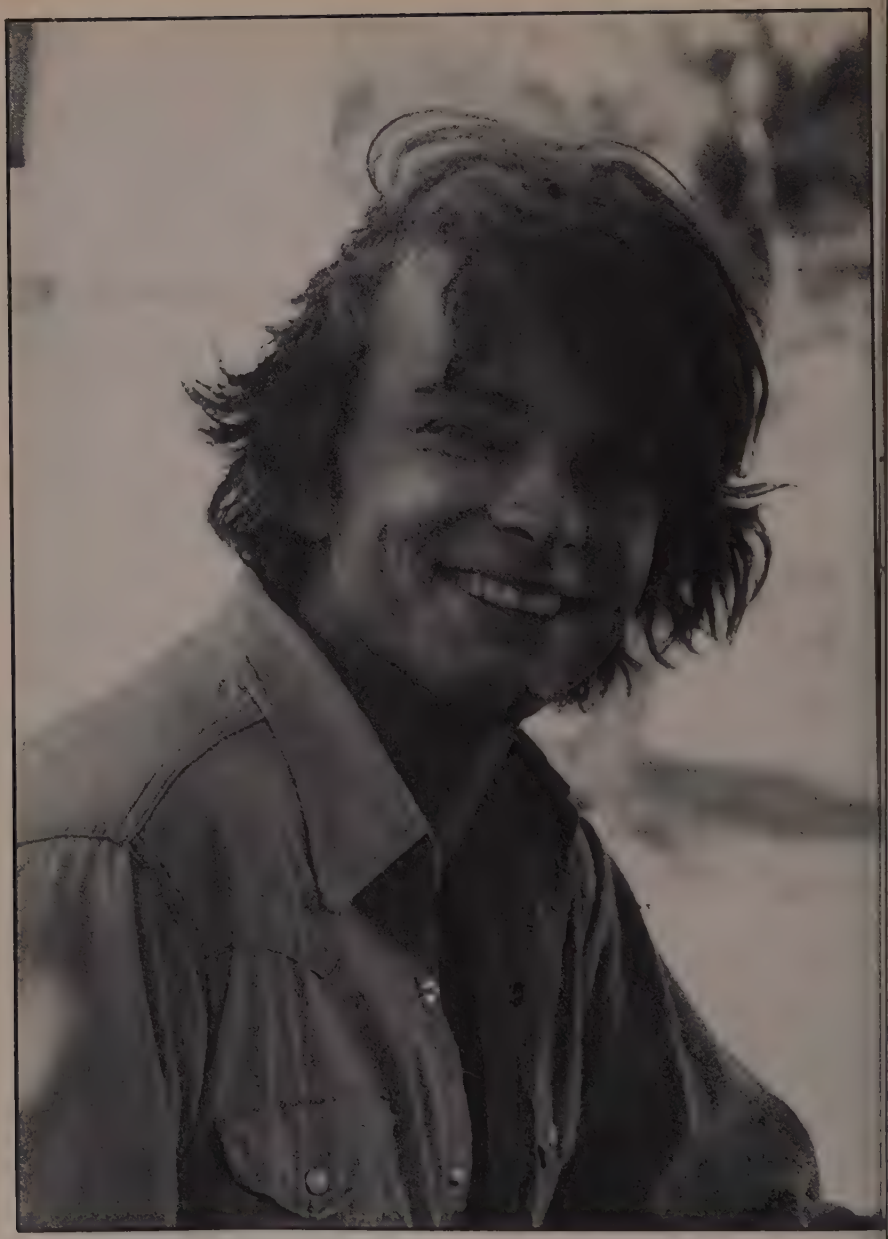
As we walked toward the students' bus, I overheard one of them observe in quiet contemplation, "It belongs to us, too." □

Lift us Lord
To dare the untrod and untried;
To care more than to keep;
To wear Thy glory upon our lives,
Until Thy love shall conquer endless earth,
And the promise of Christ be fulfilled in us;
When all things are made new.

Amen.



Francis B. Sayre, Jr.
Dean, Washington Cathedral



Photos courtesy of Columbia Pictures

EDWARD ALBERT coming away knowing yourself better

INTERVIEW BY HERMAN C. AHRENS, JR.

"The main thing I want to do is to touch people," says the 23-year-old Edward Albert—the actor, the musician, the photographer, the ecologist, the thinker.

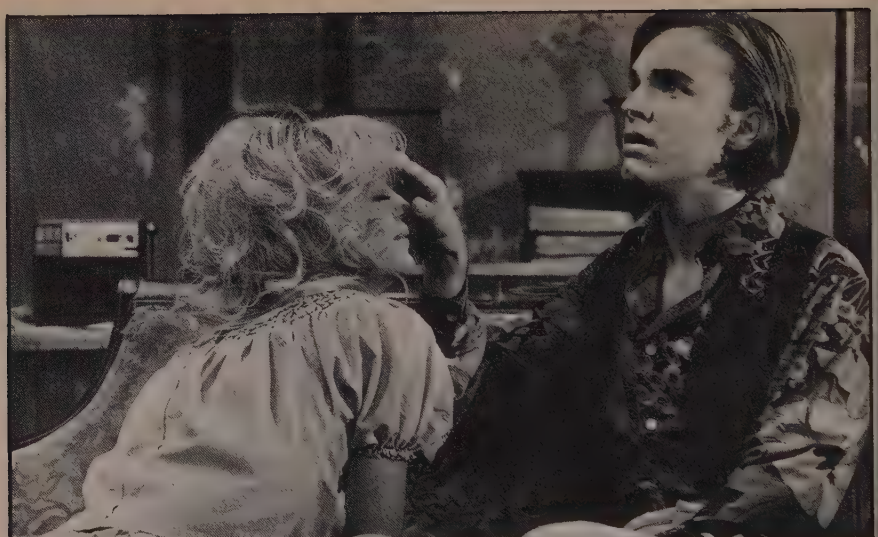
He has already touched millions with his sensitive portrayal of the blind Don Baker in the movie, "Butterflies Are Free." And he waited and worked for that role.

"Because I'm the son of Eddie and Margo Albert," Edward recalls recent years, "people would send me a couple of scripts a year. Most were nothing I was particularly interested in. I knew enough about the industry to know that if you start big, then you've got freedom of choice. If you start small, things are limited and you could spend 15 years working your way to a respectable position.

"When 'Butterflies' came along, I thought, 'Well, this is it. Either I give it everything I've got and hope I can carry it off with the grace of God and the help of the people with whom I'm working, or I'll blow it. If I blow it, then I'm no worse off than now, because I just start at the bottom and begin working my way up!' "

But Edward did not blow it!

As soon as he knew he had a chance to try out for the part, he started to work. "I learned a lot about sight that I didn't realize before. I called the Braille Institute in Los Angeles and met with them several times. I went through their rehabilitation program as though I were blind. I learned to walk on the street, use a cane, work with a dog. I learned how to work in a kitchen—when you pour wine or coffee in a cup, you have to use your fingertip to feel when it's full, because you can't see. I learned a



Goldie Hawn and Edward Albert in a scene from "Butterflies Are Free"

hundred of those little things that eventually were used in the film.

"In the meantime, I went blindfolded six to eight hours at a stretch, sometimes all day, which at first was incredibly disorienting. I had no idea how much I depended on my sight for orientation, balance, and position. I went to a party blindfolded, I walked around town with physicians' sight-stoppers on, I went on dates like that, until I could function so that people thought I was blind without dark glasses.

"Then I worked on mechanical things. I let my left eyelid droop. I worked so that I could move one eye without moving the other. When so many actors play blind roles, they stare at a fixed point, but I worked to find a neutral focus place which would let my eyes seem to wander with nothing to do with any visual object."

Edward's biggest compliment for his role in "Butterflies" was the number of people who thought he was actually blind.

"Butterflies" worked. "Forty Carats" worked.

And then there was the whirlwind of fans coming up to Edward whom he had never met before saying how much they loved and admired him. "How can they say that? They don't even know me!" It puzzled Edward at first.

"It's a thing we all go through," Edward pondered thoughtfully. "It's just more intense at certain times. When you're just entering your twenties, the old identity thing comes into view. For me it

"I went around blindfolded at parties and on dates until I could function so that people thought I was blind without my using dark glasses."

was complicated on a more subtle level because the identity that a lot of people related to was not the real me, but the movie character I played. I'm not Don Baker. I'm me. Because I never studied, the only way I could create a character was to find those characteristics in me that were analogous and extend those and then find those characteristics that were not analogous and inhibit them. So there was a lot of me in both 'Forty Carats' and 'Butterflies'—but by no means all."

Acting has been a part of Edward all of his life. He was born in Los Angeles February 20, 1951, to actress Margo (best remembered for her work in classic films such as "Winterset" and the original "Lost Horizon") and to Eddie Albert, veteran actor of stage, screen, and television. Edward grew up in California and moved with the family when his father took them along to film locations in Italy, Japan, Austria, England.

Edward reminisces: "You grow up in a situation where you are surrounded by the most creative and talented artists in the field—they're your friends, your parents' friends, your family friends. When my father came home, we talked about the movie he was working on, or I might help him cue. Then we would dialogue. We would analyze a movie on TV and discuss why it worked and why it didn't.

"And so acting is totally natural for me," Edward concludes. "I was never forced into it. In fact, my parents thought it would be wise to take as much time as I wanted to get into it—to make sure the momentum wouldn't carry me away, especially in a field where there is so much public response. It's very easy to get lost in it and suddenly realize that it's not really what you want to do."

"When I was 11," Edward recalls, "I did a movie I really didn't want to do. I wasn't emotionally or physically strong enough to handle it. So I went back to school, as I had intended to do anyway. I didn't want to start doing films at 11 because nothing is more destructive to a human being than being a child star.

"I've just recently begun to study acting," Edward reported. "When something comes naturally, you reach a point where you want to grow and the most important thing in my life is growth.

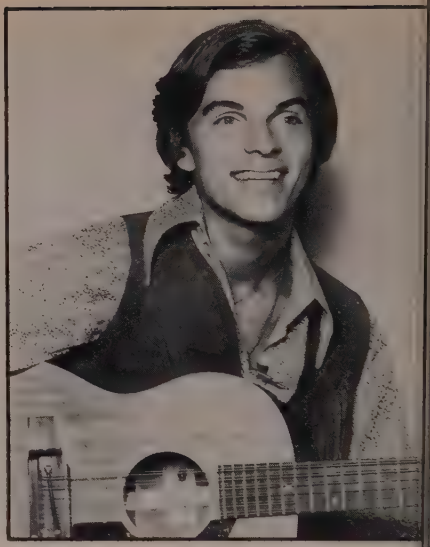
"I've seen so many wonderful, naturally-talented actors terribly

limited by simply not knowing what their tool or craft is, not having control of it, nor understanding its capacities, nor its limitations. So I've started taking Shakespeare coaching lessons. I'm really excited about it." Edward recently opened in a Los Angeles production of "Hamlet" starring Stacey Keach. Edward plays Fortinbras.

How do Edward and his friends feel about "The Exorcist"?

"It knocked me out. I felt that I had been trampled by a herd of buffalo when I walked out of there! I think it's an amazing movie. It's bound to have people saying it's either fabulous or it is the devil's presentation to our society, telling us how sick we are. Some friends and I saw an eight p.m. show, and then we went and had some pizza and we were still shaking. We had to go and see a Woody Allen movie—it took about four hours, a pizza house, another movie and stuff like that just to calm us down.

"I think the movie was definitely an incredible achievement technically, the way they carried it off. And it deals with things that are touchy to many, many people. I think that anything that's done with that amount of effort and time put into it has a validity just in terms of the human energy invested in it. I'm not going to condemn it and say it's bad or exalt it and say it's the best thing I've ever seen. It sure did affect me!"



Besides Los Angeles publi schools, Edward has studied a UCLA and schools overseas. H speaks Spanish, and some Frenc and Italian. "I was never terrific ally concerned about graduatin from college," he states, "becaus a degree doesn't mean a lot any more in our society. I was muc more concerned with getting a education. I took courses that wer interesting to me as opposed t things that were required to grad uate. In high school you have t take what you're given—and th required things necessary fo preparation for college. But onc you get into college, you shoul be free as a bird. Here I was in huge university with experts an geniuses on practically everythin and I said, 'It's the first time

"Music is my love—to play it and to write it. Nights of music spent with a couple of friends are some of the loveliest of my memories."

my life, if I'm interested in something, there is someone here who can teach me or tell me who to go to, or where to look it up and find out for myself.' People should be able to get just as much credit, and in some cases more credit, for a well-rounded education."

For example, "Candy Bergen, an old, old friend of mine, and I are looking into auditing an architecture class, because it's something we've always been interested in. No credit; just learning."

Edward is also an accomplished photographer who has had his own one-man show in Los Angeles. And he earned his living as a musician for a couple of years. "Music is my love—I love to play it, I like to write it, I play several instruments, including the guitar. I love to get together with a couple of people and just sit back, relax, and have a nice evening. Those nights of music are some of the loveliest of my memory.

"I'm waiting until I'm ready to make an album," Edward reflected. "I don't have enough material to choose from just now. Besides, I'm going through changes right now that I think will evolve into some new attitudes which will be reflected in my songs. I want to see what happens with that before I make any kind of a commitment."

Being introspective, Edward observes, "I'm changing tremendously at this point in my life, as most people do around this age. Because of the nature of the work that I'm doing and the life that I live, it's almost too fast to know what's happening. I have to try to keep a center in myself which is like an anchor for me of inner confidence or strength or tranquility, or a faith in myself. And I have to know that if I don't compromise that, I will probably be doing the right thing for my life."

"You can usually tell, there's that little voice that let's you know when you're doing something wrong. Sometimes it's harder to hear than not, but if over a period of time you listen to it and follow your instincts, your feelings or your faith, the tendency is little by little that voice gets easier and easier to hear until you don't have to listen to know what's right."

Is this his idea of religion?

"I think 'religion' is a misused and loaded word in our society," Edward responds. "It's so important for many people that their religion is the 'right' religion that

they forget about caring about their religion and start putting down other people's religions.

"Faith is very important. And faith in God or faith in myself—or the God in me—or God's plan for the world, or whatever—the natural harmony of the dimension of the space or the consciousness that we live in, is important. Important isn't the word—it's everything! Everything that I do artistically or creatively is an expression of that, and an expression of my response to dealing with a life that no human being is ever prepared for.

"You look for solace, catharsis, reassurance, and up to a point, you find that in your family and parents. Then you start asking your own questions. You start becoming your own human being. You are maturing and growing. That process of growth should never stop all through your life. If you commit yourself to that, you have to have some place of faith that has continuity, that is unvarying. Things change. You can't build yourself a little thing to hide in and never venture out.

"The excitement of life is venturing out, growing. And the more you do it, the more situations—metaphysical, physical, spiritual, emotional and pyschological—you have to deal with, the more compassionate a person you become, the more you understand where you have been, and the more you realize how far you have to go. In that commitment to growth, you also make a commitment to having faith in the strength within you, or the strength around you—whatever that is—God or religion or faith."

Edward recalls how one day he was riding his horse up to a friend's Malibu ranch when he saw a man building a house on a ridge. He stopped and offered to help. In the days that followed he and the man—Rev. Dick Coolidge from Tennessee — built the house and talked a lot about religion.

"I think preaching must be an amazing thing," Edward pondered as he probed. "It's exciting to use sense of speech, sense of entertainment, understanding what the people need, and then knowing how to respond to them. No wonder a lot of actors, who become disenchanted with acting, join up with a crusade to pass the word. I guess acting for actors is a variation of that—a touching of people. It's less direct on film or TV on stage it's closer because you have an immediate response right there; but I don't know, someday I might turn out to be a preacher. First, I have to figure out what my gospel is before I run around trying to convince other people."

Edward is not identified right now with any particular church. "My mother, being Spanish, is Catholic; my father was born Catholic and moved away from the church in his early years. The

"After seeing 'The Exorcist,' it took about four hours, a pizza house, a Woody Allen movie, and stuff like that to calm us down."

through a tremendous amount of reading — he's a very studious man — everything from Teilhard de Chardin to Lao Tzu and various forms of meditation, he has become one of the most deeply religious men I know with the least amount of the ritual of religious trapping. He has an intellectual understanding and an innate faith which 40 years of study have brought him. I feel the same. That's how I was brought up.

"My mother is more of an intuitive Catholic than a trained Catholic. She sort of loves the rituals and the mysteries. I remember at one point I was saying the church, especially the Catholic Church, has all these poor people in Mexico giving all their money and all the church does is build them altars. They should give the money for food to the poor. My mother said 'No, that's not the idea. The thing is these people pooled their money for something they believe in, and what the church builds for them is a place that they could never see in their entire life. They can go into a place that's quiet, that's clean, it's beautiful with candles and stained glass windows, and hear things which give them faith to go back and lead the lives that they live, knowing that there is more, they can grow, they're not held down.'"

Have Edward's parents been helpful to him in handling the problems posed by his unfolding career?

"I'm very close to my parents," he asserts. "When I'm going through a problem, or they're going through a problem, we have always tried to hassle it out together. When my sister was going through something, we would discuss it and try to learn what she was going through and why and how we could help. Basically, it all adds up to a family who cares about each other. They were a tremendous help to me in times of confusion or in times when my faith in myself was not the strongest."

Edward shares his father's enthusiasm for ecology. During the 60's he and his father went on research junkets connected with environmental projects and traveled to Washington, D.C. to speak with Ruckelshaus, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency. Edward feels that the energy crisis has reinforced the message that the ecologists were spreading in the late 60's. "The

feeling that I get now," he muses, "is that people are realizing that there is cause and effect. What we do—as we sow, so shall we reap. If we abuse, we will abuse only ourselves."

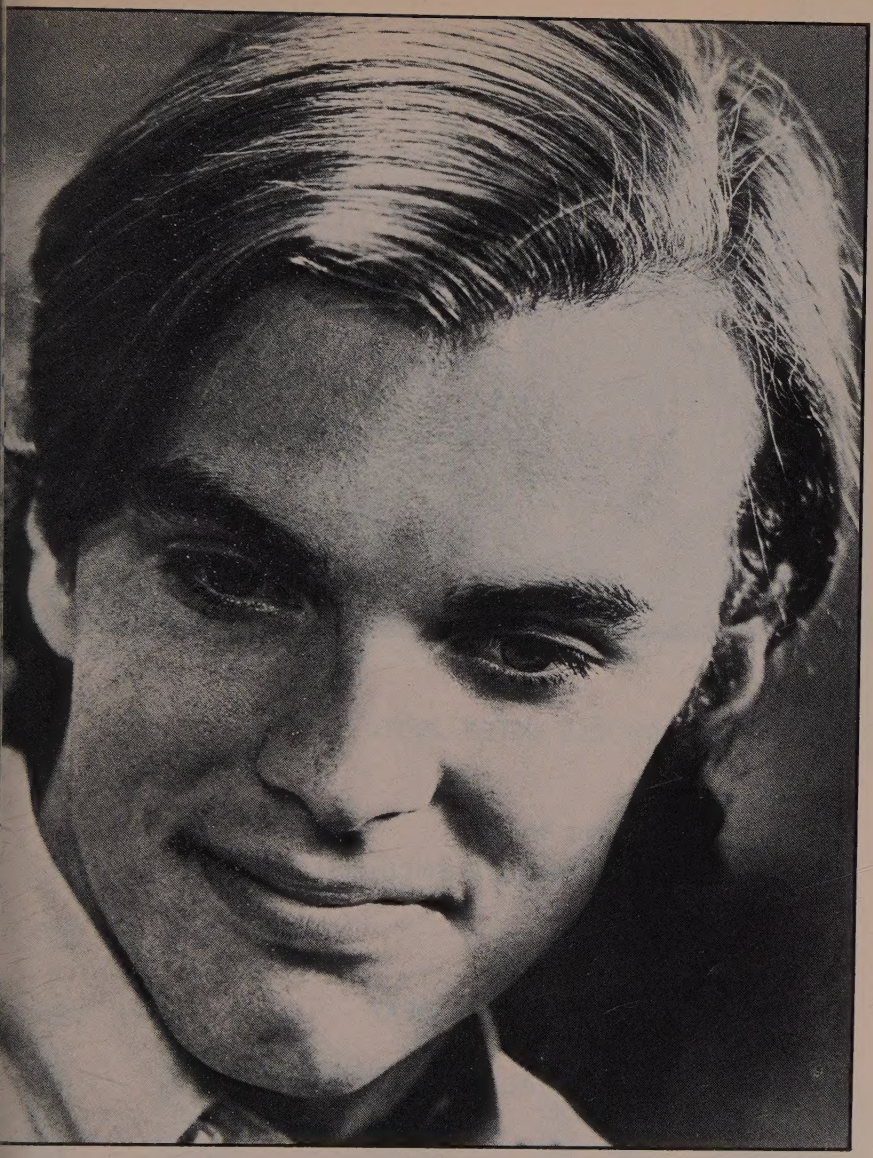
Edward sees great signs of hope. "I think that there's a tremendous fear that some terrible thing is going to happen. But consistently through history, whenever a country of strength has had its strength questioned—and the English are a tremendous example—this is a fabulous opportunity for everyone to realize that we are a nation together. We have to work for our own good, and we have to help each other. We can't deny our neighbor. No matter how calloused you are, little by little, what happens is that people begin to care beyond their own province, beyond their own space. I think we're having growing pains, but that's when you learn."

Because his mother is of Mexican birth, the family has always had a deep interest in the problems encountered by Mexican-Americans. Margo Albert, particularly, and the rest of the family to a lesser extent, have been working with the Plaza de la Raza, a project for a community cultural and educational center in Lincoln Park in Los Angeles.

When it comes to his own private life, and those close relationships he's formed outside of his family, Edward is a refreshingly private person. "I'm not of the school that feels you should bare your soul," he states firmly. "With all due respect for the public for whom I work, it's really important not to have everything I do known by everybody else. I love people's interest in me. I love to tell them anything I can about things that would mean something to them, but to talk about whether I date older women or who I'm seeing —it's not really that important.

"Anyway, I never dated a lot. I was usually with someone for a long period of time—two or three years—which when you're in high school is a long time. I was with somebody else during my college days, and as people grow in different directions, we grew in different directions. We are still very close friends. But I think now is a time for me to find an ability to just be myself—to do the work that's important for me to build a foundation for my life. It doesn't mean that I'm any less loved or love any less the people I'm with. You can't really be something for someone you love and care for and respect until you can be that for yourself."

And in his own words, that's what Edward Albert is doing. "I just mainly want to make people laugh, make them cry, make them walk out thinking, make them see somebody go through something that makes them understand themselves a little more."



The excitement of life is venturing out and growing. The more you do it, the more you understand where you have been and how far you have to go."

WHEN HIGH SCHOOLS OFFER JROTC 2
By Bob Levering

WAITING IN LINE 16
Transparencies by Doug Brunner

"CONRACK" IS BLACK-WHITE ENCOUNTER 22
By Lewis Archibald

WHO IS A STUDENT? 32
By Allan A. Glatthorn

LEARNING TO SPEAK TO THE DEAF 34
By Laura-Jean Gilbert

WASHINGTON CATHEDRAL—HOPEFUL SYMBOL? 42
By Herman C. Ahrens, Jr.

PRAYER 52
By Francis B. Sayre, Jr.

ACTING COMES NATURALLY FOR EDWARD ALBERT 54
An exclusive interview